



Ron Burnett
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands Highway Div.
610 East Fifth St.
Vancouver, WA 98661-3893

June 2, 2001

Dear Ron Burnett,

Greetings! This letter is in reference to the proposal for paving of the Thompson River Road (TRRP). It contains a few questions as well as observations. Beginning with the questions:

1. Why is the FHA looking at paving the Thompson River Road, was there a specific request from some local or regional governing body?
2. Could I have a copy of any such request by government parties made at 1 above?
3. What is the criteria screen FHA utilizes to determine which projects move forward?
4. Has the proposed TRRP passed through all of those screens and where is it at in a graduated timeline of appraisal?
5. When is the next scheduled FHA trip to the area and can I be advised and attend / accompany?

Observations:

My area of coverage for the Montana Wilderness Association regularly has me traveling a circuitous route that includes Highways 2, 56, 200, 28 and 93. Essentially traveling Kalispell to Libby, Troy, Noxon, Plains, Hot Springs and back to Kalispell. State highways 56 and 28 out of Plains are the two primary north/ south passages beside highway 93 east of the Idaho border.

I would like to address highway 28. It is a heavily used summer route between the Flathead and Clark Fork River valley at 200. It is used regularly by heavy truck traffic avoiding some of the highway 93 congestion. It is narrow and without shoulders and its surface condition abysmal in certain areas. It also runs through an area that does not require as much snow removal consideration as a TRR would.

It is my belief that the FHA would be ahead of the curve if it looked at a partial /total rebuild of highway 28 rather than a new route through the Thompson River. I believe that if and as you proceed in your TRR analysis, you should / must consider an alternative that includes reconstruction Highway 28. It is a firm belief that if you do anything in the TRR drainage it should be to combine the best segments of the twin gravel roads in the area into one good road, but leave the one resulting road unpaved. I look forward to your response. Thank you.

Keeping it wild since 1955

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